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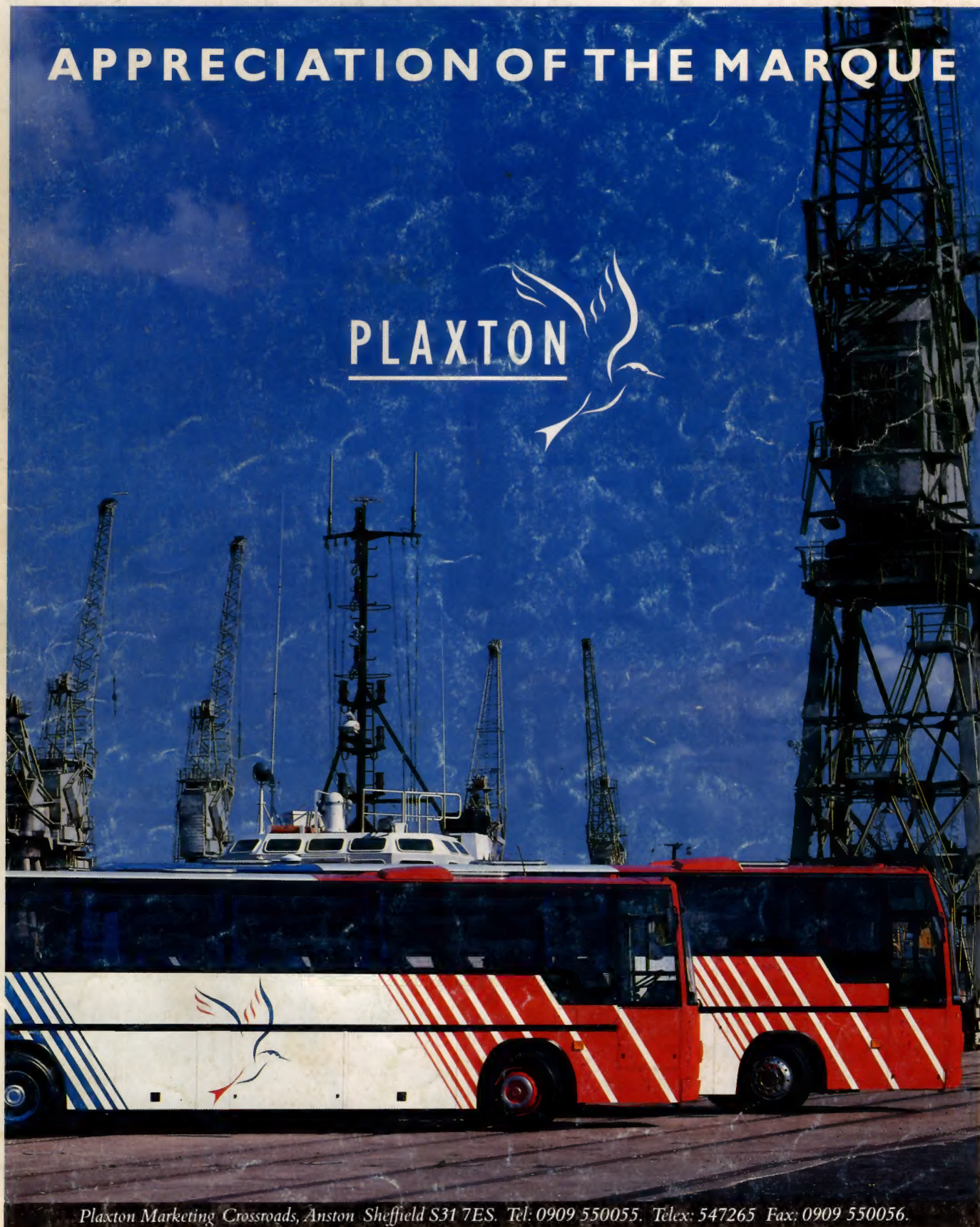
Coachmart

The leading weekly serving the coach industry

December 7, 1989 Issue 566 £1

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1982 Volvo B10M Plaxton Viewmaster, 49 seats, o/c continental door, toilet, driver's bunk, drinks machine, power door, tinted windows, livery white, autumn tint moquette, MoT March 1990.

BEDFORD

1981 Bedford YNT 53 seater Plaxton, side lockers, autumn tint moquette, livery white blue/yellow stripes.

1984 Bedford 10 metre YMP Plaxton Paramount, 38 reclining seats, Telma, private plate, choice of two.

LEYLAND

1981 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant, 53 seats, red moquette, livery white, new MoT.

1981 Leyland Leopard, 11 metre, Plaxton Supreme Express, 53 remoquetted seats, ZF 6-speed, MoT July 1990.

1981 Leyland Leopard, 12 metre Plaxton Supreme IV, 49 Chapman reclining seats, ZF 6-speed manual gearbox, Bristol dome, destination gear. Livery white, autumn tint moquette. MoT.

1980 Leyland Leopard 12 metre Supreme, 53 re-moquetted seats, Bristol dome, 6 sp ZF gearbox, side lockers, MoT 01.09.90.

1982 Leyland Tiger '245' 12 metre Plaxton Supreme V, 50/55 reclining seats, Telma, private plate, choice of two.

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- 1975 Bedford YRQ**, 45 seater Plaxton, power door, livery blue/yellow, red moq.
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EDITORIAL

Editor - Alan Millar
news editor - Mark Williams
staff writers - Rod Davey, MCIT
Mike Morgan.

ADVERTISING

Group advertisement sales manager - Jan Pepper;
national accounts manager - Nicky Davies;
sales representative - Julie Hancock;
group classified manager - Alison Hare;
classified sales executives- Sue Jones, Richard Greatorex, Sally Wright;
classified sales representative - Paul Murtagh;
classified advertisement production- Wyn Harrison;
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Validford Ltd has one vehicle suspended for six months; the High Court overturns a Traffic Commissioner's decision; and paperwork problems lead to disciplinary proceedings for a Stockport firm.



Plaxton plans assault on bus market

PLAXTON is to enter the 1990s with a streamlined sales organisation, a greater range of coaches and plans for a bigger assault on the bus market.

From January 1, it is to scrap the Kirkby Coach and Bus name of its Anston dealership, near Sheffield, and will integrate the sales and marketing activities of Kirkby and Plaxton.

Separate new vehicle, used vehicle and bus sales teams will operate from Anston and from Enfield, where Plaxton is now managing the former Arlington coach and bus dealership. From April 1, the Enfield operation will transfer to the Plaxton Duple Parts and Service site at Ware, from which a stock of about 30 used vehicles will be sold.

There are longer term plans to establish a new southern sales site, probably on one of the sites used currently by Plaxton's Henly motor group.

Although the new structure is being billed as a change to Continental-style direct marketing, Plaxton products will still be sold by W S Yeates, by Stuart Johnson on Scania chassis, and by Hughes DAF on DAF.

As well as announcing these changes, Plaxton Sales and Marketing group MD Colin Cowdery confirmed that the company does intend to resume production of the Duple 320 body at Scarborough next summer, once the 1990 season commitments for Paramount 3200, 3500 and 4000 bodies have been satisfied.

Despite the widespread gloom about the new coach market next year, Plaxton has named buyers for most of the 700 bodies it intends to build for the next season. "I stress that we are not building large amounts of stock, nor is Stuart

Johnson's. Yeates is buying a modest amount. Hughes DAF is still undecided for 1990," said Cowdery.

"Production won't be down on last year. We have a full order book on named orders to the end of May. There are no spaces until June and July."

Shearings and Parks have already placed orders for over 80 coaches for the 1991 season, all of which will be built late next year.

Cowdery says Plaxton hopes to start building 30 to 40 re-engineered versions of the 320 body bought from Duple earlier this year. Yeates has indicated "some willingness" to

take 320 bodies on Leyland Tiger and Dennis Javelin chassis and Plaxton wishes to sell some direct.

"We'd like to build them because it would help with the residual values of all the existing Duples in service," he added.

The 320s would be built next summer and could well be badged as Plaxton, rather than Duple products.

There seems no chance of any of the high-floor 340 body being built at Scarborough, but Plaxton is still looking into the prospects of restarting production of the Integral 425 design.

While it assesses the engineering and sales prospects for the 425, it has still to sell around 20 of the run-out production of the model from Blackpool as well as a similar number of Van Hool T815 integrals bought from Arlington.

Plaxton Sales will also be responsible for selling the 25 Mercedes-Benz O303 coaches to be built at Scarborough for next season, although Yeates will also be free to order some of these.

Plaxton chairman David Matthews is still determined to turn Plaxton into a fully-blown bus manufacturer in the UK "one way or another".

Arlington men join

SIX members of the Arlington team have joined Plaxton's team responsible for new and used vehicle sales in Southern England.

Roger Phillips, former Arlington coach sales director, is now Southern England sales manager for Plaxton, responsible for four new vehicle and four used vehicle sales executives.

Maurice Bateman will be on

the new vehicle sales team, Mick O'Connor and Steve Taylor on the used vehicle team.

Bob Vale, who was responsible for finance arrangements at Arlington, is joining the Roadlease team and Reg Crowe will act as consultant for Southern England.

The other members of the Southern England team are from the existing Plaxton staff.

Tough competition

TOUGH competition is reflected by the profits announced this week by the Oxford Bus Company, which made a £919,000 operating profit on £10.9 million turnover.

The former National Bus Company operator, which is facing continued competition from Transit Holdings, made an operating profit margin of 8.4 per cent of turnover.

The £545,000 pre-tax profit represents five per cent - a slight improvement on last year.

Two small firms sold

Both Bagnall's Coaches of Burton-upon-Trent and Linkline Coaches of Harlesden, have been sold to larger operators. John Bagnall has sold his seven vehicle operation to Stevenson's of Uttoxeter, and John and Audrey Thorpe have sold their fleet of eight to the Stoke-on-Trent based Paramount Leisure Ltd.

The Bagnall's deal includes freehold land at Cadley Hill Industrial Estate, with workshops and large parking space. Two of the Bagnall fleet operate on a

Northampton to Blackpool National Express service. Other work includes private hire and contracts.

Paramount is the coach subsidiary of PMT. Its Linkline acquisition provides an operating base in the South East. Managing director, Brian Jones, explained the purchase as: "Expansion with 1992 in mind, when the need for four operators to be fully accountable will require coach operations to be of good repute". "Linkline have experience of a quality market, compared to Stoke's 'price-driven' market," he added.

First sale

APPLEBY's of Louth is the first customer for the relaunched Berkhof coach range being sold by Alder Valley Engineering.

It is buying two Excellence 1000L 3.3 metre 53-seaters on Scania K93 chassis, two Excellence 2000 3.55 metre toilet-equipped bodies on K113 chassis and one Excellence 2000HD 75-seat double-decker on a tri-axle K113 chassis.

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Nigel Gray.

BCC group hammers out new set of airport scale charges

THE Bus and Coach Council's Airport Users' Group has agreed a new scale of charges with Heathrow and Gatwick after months of negotiation.

The airports had imposed hefty charges for PSV traffic without consultation in September 1988...and the BAA quickly found

itself facing the anger of operators when they made complaints to the Civil Aviation Authority and Office of Fair Trading.

The BAA sought talks soon afterwards and has now set a three-year programme of charges as a result of compromise with the BCC: "My company was facing a £200,000 bill for using the airports," said Nigel Gray, co-chairman of the user group and managing director of Speedlink Airport Services. Charges levied included £1,000 per annum for local services and £2.50 per visit for express coaches at Gatwick, and £1.40 per visit for express movements, 70p for local movements at Heathrow.

The new scale sees local services paying 28p per movement at Heathrow, rising to 40p by

1992. Express charges at Heathrow will be 76p rising to £1.05, and charters £1.71 rising to £2.38. At Gatwick, local services pay £316.50 per annum, rising to £440, express services £1.05 rising to £1.46, and charters £4.48 rising to £6.23.

"The reason for the higher charges at Gatwick is simply that it has fewer PSVs through its gates," said Gray. "Gatwick says it has to share the costs between fewer users."

Gray said he was pleased that a compromise had been reached, and that the charges were significantly less than those proposed by the BAA: "We stated from the outset that coach operators did not object to a reasonable charge being made," he added.



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Hands across the ocean

BBRITISH companies literally rallied to a French initiative to promote public transport for the handicapped last week, when vehicles headed across the channel.

A 50-seater bus, several lift-equipped minibuses, and a London taxi all equipped for the disabled, were among vehicles shipped free of charge to Dunkirk by P&O European Ferries. Accompanying the vehicles was a large contingent of British delegates from several disability organisations.

The exhibition and conference was organised by the French

Government as an initiative of the French Presidency of the European Community.

* A competition for designers and engineers within the transport industries has been spawned by the drive towards better facilities for the disabled.

Cromwell Steels, which markets low-cost stainless steels for body frames, has put up three £1,000 prizes in separate categories to the designs which best cater for the elderly and handicapped. The 3CR12 specification material, around which the competition hinges, has been used in several spaceframe applications, including coaches and buses.

Entry forms are available from Chris Beckitt, Cromwell Steels, The Old Vicarage, Tittensor, Stoke-on-Trent ST12 9HD.

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Bridge meets its Waterloo

WATERLOO Bridge in London will be closed from 6am on January 2 for six days while essential repairs are made. Operators using the bridge are advised by Metropolitan Police to use Westminster, Southwark and Blackfriars Bridges. Southbound traffic from Aldwych is advised to use Arundel Street, Temple Place, Victoria Embankment, Puddle Dock, Queen Victoria Street and Blackfriars Bridge.

Surprise free service boost for Scarborough passengers

SCARBOROUGH passengers and local bus companies got a real shock last week when Four Oaks Travel's Caton-Scarborough service was run for free for three days.

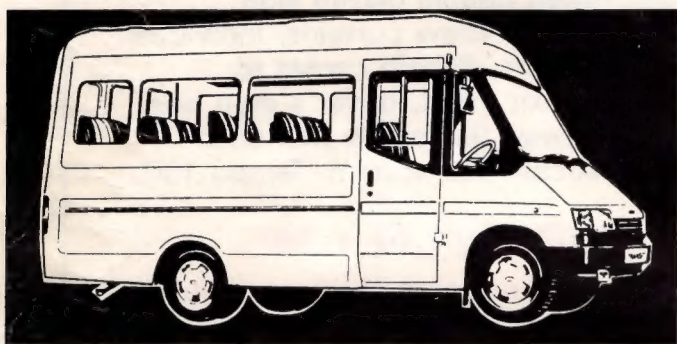
Four Oaks - run by Terry Campling and John Porter - had de-registered the route then re-registered it at double the frequency,

leaving a three-day unregistered gap. The Bedford and Leopard coaches still ran - with a charity collection box next to the driver.

Scarborough and District's general manager Eric Boyes was mystified by the move: "I've no idea why they did it," he said. "In fact, while they were running their free service, we found we got

more revenue on our competing Skipper One service."

Four Oaks Travel - whose partner John Porter was not available for comment - is clearly going for the hard sell, with a £5 pensioner discount card giving half-price fares for six months, and seriously undercutting Scarborough and District's price.



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Pringle plans big Glasgow tour push

GLASGOW operator Alex Pringle is hoping to cash in on the choice of the city as 1990's City of Culture, by running a round-Glasgow tour through the summer.

Taking in all bar one of the major city attractions, the tour will see two coach-seated service buses providing six trips a day, six days a week. The fare for an entire day's touring will be around £3.50, and Pringle is expecting this to attract more than a few locals.

"Our tourists are not the kind you'd expect in London or York," Pringle told Coachmart. "Most of

them are geared to arts and roots...Americans seeking their ancestry, for instance."

"Because of this, we'll be using only Blue Badge guides who can answer all their questions. There is a great need, though, to tie up all of Glasgow's points of interest, since they are sprinkled throughout the city."

Pringle has not yet bought vehicles but is tied to single-decks - Glasgow is not suitable for open-tops - and is going to equip them with PA and luxury seating. The firm has been catering for the ever-growing tourism market for only the last three years.

Bedford community service is launched

ANOTHER community bus service funded by the Rural Development Commission has been launched Michael Portillo, Minister of State for Public Transport.

Based around Shefford, in Bedfordshire, the service takes pensioners to the post office and children to school at Samuel Whitbread School and Community College, where the bus is based. The Dormobile-bodied Transit and its scheme costed £26,000, half of which came from the RDC.

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 1975-77 BRISTOL VRT3. Northern Counties, 2 door, no test certificates.
 1972-75 LEYLAND ATLANTIAN AN68. East Lincs and Park Royal bodies, current test certificates.

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 1981 'W' reg BEDFORD YNT Duple, 46 reclining seats and spare set of 49 fixed seats, current test certificate.
 1982 LEYLAND TIGER Duple Goldliner, 46 seats, d/glazing, toilet on saloon floor, current test certificate. Choice of two.

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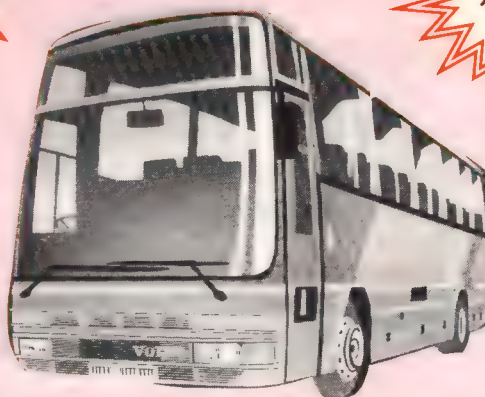
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Passengers spoilt for choice

PASSENGERS on the Edinburgh-Glasgow route are going to be spoilt for choice as Scottish Citylink swings into action with a quarter-hourly, top-quality, service during peak times.

The frequency increase is a blatant attempt to undermine the Cityline 500 luxury service run by Silver Coach Lines of Edinburgh and Greens of Kirkintilloch. Citylink is running almost all

single-decks - with the notable exception of one double-deck Metroliner retired from cross-border service - and hopes quality will win customers back.

"Some of the previous vehicles were buses with coach seats," said Citylink MD Alan Howes. "We now offer an improved standard of comfort." Howes admitted the move had come as a direct result of the competition, and that the new service he offered was not as

profitable as the old.

Meanwhile, Silver Coach Lines is known to be hawking its services on the route to Citylink, which has expressed an interest, and to National Express, which is rumoured to be planning similar services in the New Year. A spokesman for National/Caledonian Express said: "I am not aware of any immediate plans, but we are always looking at new business opportunities."

Students the target

OVERSEAS students are the target of National Express's Tourist Trail Pass ticket, offering unlimited travel for a single fare.

The ticket is up for grabs for any 16 to 23-year-old in full-time education, and is to be heavily marketed to the age group. Priced at between £33 for five days, up to £97 for 30 days, the pass is available at many UK agencies and 16 countries overseas.

Rumours scotched

RUMOURS that Drifffield-based Revills Coaches had been sold to East Yorkshire Motor Services have been scotched by EYMS.

EYMS's Peter Ship said negotiations had foundered but admitted that there was interest in the company - which competes on some localbus routes with EYMS. The bulk of its business is believed to be contract work.

Wild West Wingding

NOTTINGHAM Coach Operators' Association has organised an annual dance with a difference for January 19.

Stetsons and ponchos are order of the day at Turners Banqueting, in Woodborough Road, for the shoot-out. 'Bounty' for the event is £17.50, and organiser Malcolm Hearson can be trailed to 11 Ridsdale Road, Sherwood, Nottingham. Overnight accommodation can be arranged.

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FLEET UPDATE

All our very own

This Plaxton Paramount 3500 bodied Volvo B10M has been bought recently by Rapson's Coaches of Alness.

Seen in Sheffield on route 237 to Inverness, the Volvo is in Scottish Citylink colours. Rapson's reached an eleventh-hour agreement with Citylink after dissatisfaction with terms offered by National Express following its takeover of Stagecoach express services. The opportunity to own rather than lease was one advantage of the Citylink contract and this new coach is the first of five to be acquired by Rapson's to meet its new commitment.



New coaches for Scotts



Pictured are the first new coaches for Scotts Tours of Surrey Quays, South London.

The two LAG Panoramic integrals will be used on a range of duties, including private hires and Kent commuter services from Tunbridge Wells and the

Maidstone area.

Both vehicles have 290 bhp DAF DKV engines, ZF S6-90 six-speed manual gearboxes and Telma retarders. The body specification features 49 reclining seats, TV and video, fridge, toilet, radio telephones and two-way radios.

Consecutive registrations

Supreme Coaches of Coventry has taken delivery of these two new coaches supplied by Yeates of Loughborough.

A two-tone blue livery and consecutive registrations identify the pair, although their

specifications differ. The Duple bodied Dennis Javelin is a short wheelbase 8.5 metre model with 35 seats. On the right is a 12 metre Mercedes-Benz 0303 seating 53. Both coaches feature reclining seats, soft trim, and radio/PA/cassette.



High-flying Leyland National

Martins (Bus and Coach Sales) report a steady market for ex-NBC Leyland Nationals. This 11.3 metre Mark 1 49 seater has been repainted at Martins' Middlewich workshops to the requirements of British Aerospace.

The 14 year-old bus will be used on non-PSV operation at the BAe Chester factory.

CREATING THE RIGHT IMAGE

Coachmart ended its first, but extremely successful, conference season with its IMAGE TO INCREASE SALES conference held at the Kensington Palace Hotel in London. Rod Davey was there to report on a symposium of unusual depth and breadth.



Coachmart's Image to Increase Sales Conference at the Kensington Palace Hotel ended its highly successful first conference season, with many operators taking home the marketing ideas discussed.

OPERATORS left the Coachmart Image Conference at the Kensington Palace Hotel in London satisfied the industry's leading trade magazine had organised an informative and enlightening series.

The overall feeling at the Image Conference was one of satisfaction not only with the depth of discussion - but with the breadth of subject matter covering a whole range of marketing issues.

Coachmart Editor Alan Millar launched the proceedings, saying: "Few people know modern coaches rival the airlines with the same standard of comfort - but with a significant qualitative improvement on punctuality and reliability." However, given the demographic age profile of the typical coach user, he warned the core market was forever disappearing. What was needed was the right approach to marketing the operators' image to ensure a healthy bottom line in the future.

First speaker, Wallace Arnold MD John King, was not sure image alone increased business. Having served as general manager of National Holidays before taking his current post with Wallace Arnold four years ago, King had turned around a large coach operation making losses into a successful enterprise. Although many operators did not help to destroy the old coaching image of "uncomfortable, dirty, scruffy, smelly and unreliable coaches", he felt generally coaches were good - "only we don't tell them - often enough".

He outlined the strategy he followed to improve the image of Wallace Arnold, which included standardising nine different livery styles into one corporate identity and six different chassis towards using only Volvo.

The WA livery, he felt, promoted a bright and cheerful image which created a desired ambience - encouraging trust with a combination of progress and traditional values. Among King's suggestions for improving image were attention to depots, the importance of telephone manner, a translatable livery logo style for corporate stationery and a strong emphasis on the need to use outside help to research customer reaction for market advantage.

While there were a few jokes about coach travel, Alan Millar felt these came to nothing when compared to those about Lada cars. Lada MD Martin Austin cheerfully took up the gauntlet, thanking Millar for mentioning Lada was the 14th best selling car in the UK,

building half the cars imported from Eastern Europe, and earning good profits for both importers and dealers.

Lada's success was based largely on the practicality of its client base - and marketing was geared towards that rather than on a psychological or emotional basis.

On image, Russia's was "not a lot", and the cars have the "aerodynamic styling of a building brick". Lada's unique selling proposition (USP) was "price and value for money" - and they sell because "the specification is as good, if not better, than many other makes".

All this made a useful comparison with the down market image of much of coach travel. Austin suggested the problem should be tackled by ignoring the brickbats and effectively identifying and qualifying the client base with market research. Austin also said the use of customer incentives, including price offers over limited

periods, had been employed successfully by the company. He urged operators to "make the customer the hero", and said research had alarmingly shown every dissatisfied customer told seven others - who all told yet another seven.

Jon Cockerill, of the Tourism Works specialist marketing services, felt, unlike Austin, that operators should "learn to mistrust market research" - and directly ask clients what they really want. He said: "Marketing produces tours which may sell, the operator delivers - but it is the customer who finally decides what sells". He urged operators to be more responsive and imaginative, following up with a "Rumpole-like" case for the sale to the consumer.

Price competition was not the answer; instead a more creative product was required built on a foundation of truly creative marketing, including squeezing good entrance rates out of

attractions who "need coaches to make their profits". And imagination should be accompanied by discipline, especially in controlling costs, to ensure success is continuous.

Graphic artist Ray Stenning, of marketing, publicity and design consultancy Best Impressions, spoke mainly of the importance of good livery design with "a coherent and purposeful pattern" - but as part of a total marketing strategy. Customer care meant attention to detail to create confidence both within and without an organisation. Liveries should be "welcoming, friendly and businesslike".

Stenning showed slides of a number of liveries he had designed together with other liveries he felt were either visually confusing, cheap and nasty or suffered from an "identity crisis". Operators should produce a "sexy" image by seeking expert advice.

Lindsay Swan, of Holder Swan Public Relations, had some excellent advice for simple PR success and for crisis management - both revolved around the best way to handle the media. Saying editorial was four times more effective than straight advertising, Swan told the Conference about many ways of improving the company image to the world at large. This could be achieved by following a number of steps including finding the company's unique selling proposition, nominating a press spokesperson and developing a PR plan on how to make news.

Sales development manager with Trust House Forte, Carys Thomas, ended the Conference with an extremely lively presentation. Expounding the principles of CARE (customers are really everything), Thomas said customers were important because in the service industries they are the only source of revenue and employment. Staff awareness training in self-projection was important as was staff selection.

Thomas had a number of simple equations to ensure the operator served his market successfully and profitably. For example, with audience interaction she asked "how can we satisfy customers?" The reply was: "Give them what they want - and find this out with qualitative and quantitative research". She also suggested ways of monitoring CARE performance, but stressed managers should lead "by example".

Alan Millar summed up the contributions, and operators were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the wealth of ideas the conference had uncovered.

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Knights of the Road- a thing of the past



AT one time of day lorry drivers were really "Knights of the Road", but today many of them are just the opposite. Their record on speeding is far worse than that of coaches, but we have to gear up to speed limiters (I have just spent over £400 on a retro-fit) while the haulage industry drives on smiling.

Some lorry drivers have also adopted another rather naughty trick. On dual carriageways or two lane motorways when there are signs of roadworks ahead, two trucks drive side by side in order to prevent overtaking by other vehicles. I have observed this little game being played too often just recently. On one occasion, on the A1 at Wetherby, it was taking place three miles before the roadworks. In this instance a lorry in the nearside lane added insult to injury by crawling along and leaving a gap of up to half a mile between him and the traffic in front.

Not only is this an immediate danger, as frustrated motorists will attempt to overtake on the hard shoulder or any central

verge; it also holds up vehicles getting to any approaching junction. This could be a matter of life and death if the obstructed vehicle is one of the emergency services or a doctor. I hope I do not see coach drivers participating in this stupid frolic.

The correct observance of the law at pedestrian crossings and traffic lights is also something

about which a sample of all classes of road users are now somewhat lackadaisical. In some areas successful prosecutions have ensued as a result of a camera unit which is synchronised with the adjacent traffic light. There may be drivers who think that this is done with the swivelling cameras on top of very tall poles

which can now be seen from great distances away in some city centres. This is, however, not the case. These traffic light offender detectors are very innocuous and undistinguished bits of street furniture. There is only one certain way of not getting caught by these spy units - by stopping when the lights turn red.

Protect me from enthusiasts

I GRABBED a cab as I came out of one of the excellent *Coachmart* seminars. What I wanted to do was sort out in my mind the many useful ideas which the day had deposited in my mental "in tray". In my pre-occupied state I had forgotten to take off the *Coachmart* delegates' badge. The cabbie noticed it, asked what *Coachmart* was, and then launched into his passion for coaches: Had I ever driven an OB? Did I ever meet George Ewer and wasn't the Daimler 'Q' type a marvellous vehicle? My

monosyllabic answers did not diminish his determination to pursue this unexpected opportunity of grilling me regarding his hobby, even to the extent that, before long, he was begging me to go halves with him and purchase a Routemaster. I was more than pleased when I reached the station!

I am not a PSV enthusiast. Buses and coaches are, to me, no more than the tools with which to make money. But I am always co-operative when the duffle coat brigade want to take pictures and I am quite

happy to give them some sample tickets and timetables if it keeps them happy. But what I detest, and ignore, is badly written letters like the one I received recently: "I am doing a project on Bus & Coach Compaines [sic] and would like your help please. With the following items Company History Photos and timetable." Sorry lads, my compassion for your addiction does not extend to providing those sorts of goodies - especially when no stamped, addressed, envelopes accompany the request.

Customer care rules—OK?

I KNOW his name was Arthur Prince, because he told us so as he welcomed the passengers on board. He told us what the plan for the day was, where and when we would be stopping, the route we would take and wished us a pleasant day. He also took the trouble to tell us how to work the air vents and rack lights and pointed out that there was a toilet midships should we have a need to use it.

During the day he continued with this sort of helpful advice and comment. He really made us all feel that he was there to look after us and that nothing was too much trouble for him in ensuring that we enjoyed our day. At the close of this educational tour, which had

taken us to a highly robotic car factory, Arthur bade us all farewell and expressed the hope that his company would have the pleasure of taking us out again another day. Which, undoubtedly they will, if only because the driver did no less and only a little more, than all coach passengers now expect.

On the other hand driver 'X', and I have to call him that because he did not tell us who he was, drove me and others around for an entire weekend, without ever making a single utterance to the group as a whole. He was never seen by any of us other than seated in his driving seat - in other words he did not help passengers on or off the coach. I formed the opinion that it would have been a great

deal more exciting had we been driven by a robot. I and my fellow passengers were united in the opinion that we would not be particularly keen to patronise that firm again. These contrasting incidents are totally, factually, true. I have not concealed or expanded anything in relating them, nor drawn any conclusions. What I have yet to tell you is that Arthur was driving a nearly new BIOM, but the steed of driver 'X' was a nine year old Bedford. Now you may think, and no one could totally gain-say you, that there is not a lot to get excited about driving a nine year old Bedford and that it was only natural that Arthur would feel rather happier with his low mileage Volvo and

that his pleasure would translate into keeping his passengers happy.

That is, however, not quite the conclusion which I would draw. Is it not equally true that, with drivers like Arthur, his firm is more likely to have the work for smart new motors - but that driver 'X's boss will have to make do with nine year old Bedfords for quite a while longer? Customer care is the in thing, and is likely to remain so for a long while yet. It seems very sad to me that there are operators and drivers who have not yet recognised that business advancement will not be achieved, and job security is jeopardised by a failure to give today's coach customer what he expects from drivers.

ROAD TEST



HOUND DOG HARRIER

By Rod Davey (MCIT)

Rod Davey road tests the Reeve Burgess Harrier/Leyland Swift bus around the urban roads of Sheffield, Chesterfield and Nottingham - and finds an excellent tool for both urban and rural local bus work with a bargain basement price tag of £45,000.



Instrumentation is set into the standard symmetrical Leyland Swift modular layout with a commendable simplicity of design and operational practicality.

PERHAPS one of the most successful body/chassis combinations on the popular Leyland Swift long

wheelbase chassis, I gave Reeve Burgess's Harrier coach full marks for both build and value for money (Coachmart 518, January 6, 1989).

The Harrier Bus is no exception to this rule. While in some ways it exceeds expectations in both build and value for money, the Swift chassis with its mid-mounted Cummins 6BT 5.9 turbocharged diesel engine provides certain constraints regarding its higher floor for service bus use. And other builders have tried adapting the Swift to bus use, especially in these days of active lobbying from such passenger interest groups as the National Federation of Bus Users, only to fail.

With this chassis, the whole thing hinges on the suitability of the step design - which in the Harrier bus's case is more than adequate. A higher floor bus, of necessity, must always concentrate the road tester's mind on the ease of access and egress for passengers. But, while low floors are almost certainly always preferable, we live in the real world of balancing fixed and variable costs with revenue to produce a competitive product and hopefully an economic profit.

Failures of building buses on Swifts have revolved around step configuration - and to Reeve Burgess's credit, this is a successful design. Even, well spaced, steps are a feature of the coach and are repeated here on the

bus - but with a wider jack-knife door with an 'easy entry' stepwell complete with handrails. While the problem is undoubtedly impossible to solve, its worst aspects have been minimised with what looks to be the optimal solution.

Outside in

Externally, the Harrier bus is almost a twin of the coach - if one ignores the extra seating capacity of 41 seats with room for 16 standees, created very largely by the deletion of the capacious rear boot.

Similarly, its all-steel body framing is mounted on to a steel sub-frame which is fully protected, internally and externally, against corrosion - together with sides of zinc-coated steel sheet with side rub-rails. GRP front and rear aspects complete the overall similarities.

And the front panel is also complete with the feature cantilevered hatch, combined with side panels and an interior trap door, for access to regular service items. Its main advantage is to give frontal access in a limited space - but it also gives the vehicle an attractive modern look with the recessed appearance of the front parallelogram wipers.

Finished at Pilsey in 2-pack polyurethane paint, the bus is glazed with a one-piece laminated and curved heated windscreen, with toughened glass to both sides and the rear window. Specifically, this bus variant featured three hopper windows to each side,

ROAD TEST

together with triple route number and destination equipment. However, the destination blind is set inside the upper windscreen, which may give some bus operators cause for concern as reflective glare often lessens its visibility for the potential passenger.

Inside, it is a totally different story. In particular, I was impressed with the service bus layout in the driver's area - which is built complete with a driver's bulkhead and ticket machine stand. In this connection it is also worth mentioning the machine's electrics which, with a 25V system from two 12V 120Ah batteries mounted on a convenient slide out carrier, is suitable for Wayfarer installation without any adaptation.

The service bus driver's configuration is also available with two variations. Whereas the test vehicle, having an automatic transmission, had a driver's half height door with a coin box plate as an available option, manual variants are provided with a half height driver's door to the rear of the driver's narrow bulkhead. A nice touch which anticipates problems of access around the gear lever, and makes for a safer cab environment.

Overall, the entry area is also enhanced with a handrail to the front of the entrance - and the driver's bulkhead is matched with a courtesy screen with a full height stanchion at the nearside. Once the chassis floor height is reached, via a small aisle step, the whole saloon's level area is covered in smooth and servicable Treadmaster.

With 41 seats, the Harrier bus does not have a luggage pen, but this option is available to the



Being a high floor chassis the Harrier's suitability for service bus use revolves around step configuration - it scores with the wider jackknife door and 'easy entry' stepwell.

operator who does not mind the removal of a few seats and the consequent reduction in seating capacity. All standard seats are

low-back moquette with stainless steel top rails and the backs panelled to match the interior lining.



Side panels combine with a cantilevered front hatch and interior trap door to give access for routine maintenance.

Hi-back coach seats are available as an option here, and it may be that this nod in the direction of dual-purpose specification is what is needed to make this product a viable alternative to low-floor service buses, of whatever size or capacity.

My main criticisms, from the passenger's point of view, concern standee handrail and bellpush positioning. One full-length roof handrail provides grip for the bus's potential 16 standees and bell pushes are roof mounted as standard. With Diptac and semi-Diptac specification becoming increasingly popular, one would have thought bell pushes mounted into roof to seat top rail stanchions would be now standard fitment, instead of being optional extras as on the test vehicle.

The old bus driver's joke about the elderly chap taken past his stop because he couldn't reach the bell due to a back complaint rings cruelly clear here. And of course the standard driver's reply, "Quasimodo managed", is not particularly helpful. However, the optional fitments on the bus tested show the way, with four seat to roof stanchions. I particularly liked the bright green plastic coating on the internal railing - an excellent aid for many partially-sighted passengers.

Driving

I have evaluated so many Swifts it would be repetitive to go through

Chassis Replacement Costs:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Air Cleaner Element | £29.43 ex-VAT. |
| Oil Filter | £8.43 ex-VAT. |
| Fuel Filter | £16.18 ex-VAT. |
| Rear Axle brake Shoe Liner Kit | £76.84 ex-VAT. |
| Front Axle Brake Pad Kit | £92.00 ex-VAT. |
| Clutch Disc | £41.79 ex-VAT. |
| Power Steering Pump | £115.00 ex-VAT. |
| Radiator | £166.17 ex-VAT. |
| Shock Absorber (front) | £45.00 ex-VAT. |
| Shock Absorber (rear) | £26.62 ex-VAT. |
| Drive Belt | £20.66 ex-VAT. |
| Starter Motor | £244.67 ex-VAT. |
| Water Pump | £30.00 ex-VAT. |
| Alternator | £121.96 ex-VAT. |

Body Replacement Costs:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Heated Windscreen | £1,100.00 ex-VAT. |
| Plain side window | £80.00 ex-VAT. |
| Complete hopper window | £140.00 ex-VAT. |
| Tail light cluster | £45.43 ex-VAT. |
| Headlight | £39.00 ex-VAT. |
| Front indicator | £35.00 ex-VAT. |

ROAD TEST

the fascia layout yet again. It is sufficient to say instrumentation is set into the standard symmetrical Leyland modular layout - which I have always found commendable both for its simplicity of design and practicality in operation.

Seated in the fully-adjustable and comfortable driver's seat, with excellent forward and rearward visibility, the Harrier Bus was a joy to drive. Both at the sharp end and in the saloon the Swift chassis gave a nice firm ride, not too bouncy for service bus use and with little discernible roll and pitch.

Within the cab area elbow room was adequate, even if one imagines all installations, such as a Wayfarer machine, are fitted. In fact, the Harrier bus beats many of its bigger brothers in this respect, while still giving plenty of room for passenger access - due to the optimally angled half-cab door.

Combined with these positive points, steering was very light and the vehicle was extremely manoeuvrable, both forwards and backwards. Taken with performance (see panel) this

amounts to a nippy and nimble machine, especially for urban use. Around Sheffield, especially the narrow leafy streets around the University area, the Harrier performed well, although it was not loaded on the test.

Similarly, fuel economy in its unloaded condition, and over a route covering over 100 miles, was an impressive 11.51mpg. I estimate this would translate into an in-service consumption figure of around 10mpg, comparing well with many conventional bus averages of 8mpg/9mpg I have previously logged.

With the test route taking in the undulating terrain of both Sheffield and Cheterfield it gave me many ideal opportunities to evaluate the machine's pulling power up hills. The combination of the 5.9-litre 130bhp Cummins 6BT turbocharged diesel transmitted through the Allison AT545 automatic transmission showed its worth time and time again, but unloaded. Although it might be a different story fully loaded I left the bus with the impression it would probably cope quite

adequately.

Verdict

The Reeve Burgess design sits very comfortably on the Leyland Swift, and to my mind confounds the critics who would not consider a high floor chassis for bus use. While I agree low floors are preferable, consideration of the

level of initial investment, with the Harrier's competitive price, must be taken into account.

As far as residuals are concerned this is a hard one, as there is a scarcity of second-hand Swifts on the market in *Coachmart's* classifieds. Of course, the fact that operators appear to be sticking to their vehicles speaks for itself.

I noticed only one exception

VEHICLE ASSESSMENT

Engine/Transmission -

Despite initial reservations about the Allison automatic gearbox (see Beaver/RTI S75 Roadtest, Winter Minibus 1989, the AT545 did not suffer the same problems as the AT542 - with a severe change from first to second, claimed to be due to incorrect adjustment. And the gearbox/engine match of the AT545/Cummins 6BT appeared a happier marriage than the AT542/Perkins Phaser 110T combination, with graduated changes directing power and torque smoothly.

Brakes -

Although the option of a Telma retarder is available, the vehicle's front discs and rear drums coped well in all conditions on the test route, with progressive braking producing a safe reduction of speed in a straight line.

Steering -

Its ZF integral power assisted steering was wonderfully light, increasing both confidence and manoeuvrability in tight situations.

Roadholding -

A nice firm ride creating no anxiety whatsoever.

Controls -

Usual Leyland Swift modular layout, with everything easy to hand.

Visibility -

Apart from usual blindspots at windscreen pillars, forward view was very good. In common with the Beaver range, a combination of interior height and bus seats on the Harrier gave an excellent rearward view through the interior panoramic mirror. An option is available for heated exterior mirrors.

Noise -

Not excessive.

Heating -

Purmo convection, with Eberspacher option.

Ventilation -

One lift-up roof with three hopper windows to each side. Options available for an additional roof vent and/or Flettner.

Lighting -

Roof interior fitted with six fluorescent light units. Three night lights per side fitted in cant rail coving with dash-mounted control.

Luggage -

No luggage space on test vehicle, but options available for luggage pen and rear boot, both of which reduce seating capacity, as well as interior luggage racks with lights in rack edges facing inwards.



Seat intrusion is minimised with the wide emergency door at the rear offside.

ROAD TEST

recently, with one operator asking £43,500 for a 37-seater Harrier coach with part exchange considered for a larger capacity coach - a price near enough the ex-VAT price to suggest that at least one operator feels high depreciation is not part of the equation.

While the coach Harrier has sold like hot cakes, this bus variant has been a little slower to move. However, welfare versions are selling quite well, including nine for Avon County Council. I get the feeling the predicted expansion of the medium capacity bus market has not taken off quite as fast as people in the supply side of the industry had predicted.

I see no reason why the Harrier Bus should not carve a sizeable niche in the mid-capacity service bus market for itself. A popular and now well-tried chassis combined with both Reeve Burgess's experience and undoubted body building skill should see an upward curve in sales next season.



Options on the test variant, with seat to roof stanchions and low bell pushes, are a considerable improvement on the standard specification which provides hard to reach roof-mounted bell pushes.

SPECIFICATIONS

Vehicle: Reeve Burgess Harrier Bus based on the Leyland Swift chassis complete with Allison automatic gearbox.

Seats: 41 plus 16 standees.

Price: £45,000 net ex-VAT (with Telma retarder £47,060).

Dimensions:

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Length | 9,075mm. |
| Width | 2,450mm. |
| Height | 3,000mm. |
| Wheelbase | 4,400mm. |
| Rear overhang | 2,625mm. |
| Front overhang | 2,050mm. |

Weights:

| | |
|---------|----------|
| Unladen | 5,160kg. |
| GVW | 9,100kg. |

Engine:

Type Cummins 6BT 5.9-litre 6-cylinder vertically mounted turbocharged diesel.
Bore x stroke 102mm x 120mm.
Displacement 5,900cc.
Maximum net output 130bhp @ 2,500rpm.
Maximum net torque 325 lbf ft @ 1,500rpm.
General CAV DPA type fuel pump; pressurised 'no loss' cooling system with engine-driven fan via viscous coupling; Bendix 150 reed valve type compressor; air throttle.

Transmission:

Gearbox Allison AT545 automatic, direct drive.

| Gear | Ratio | Maximum speed |
|---------|--------|---------------|
| 1st | 3.40:1 | 12mph |
| 2nd | 2.25:1 | 20mph |
| 3rd | 1.41:1 | 29mph |
| 4th | 1.00:1 | 50mph |
| Reverse | 5.03:1 | |

Gearbox option Turner T5.290 5-speed synchromesh overdrive.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Clutch | Single plate with non-asbestos lining. |
| Diameter | 330mm. |
| Area | 532 sq cm. |

| Gear | Ratio |
|---------|--------|
| 1st | 5.36:1 |
| 2nd | 2.62:1 |
| 3rd | 1.51:1 |
| 4th | 1.00:1 |
| 5th | 0.79:1 |
| Reverse | 4.73:1 |

Axles:

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Front | 'I' section alloy steel beam. |
| Rear | Single reduction spiral bevel. |

Final drive ratio 4.66:1.

Suspension:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Front | Twin taper leaf; anti-roll bar and telescopic dampers. |
| Rear | Twin taper leaf; anti-roll bar and telescopic dampers. |

Brakes:

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Type | Air hydraulic dual-line system. |
| Front | Disc brakes, area 476 sq cm. |

Rear Drum brakes, area 1,412 sq cm - on rear wheels.
Parking brake Cable operated spring brake unit on rear axle.
Auxiliary Exhaust brake.

Steering:

ZF power-assisted, adjustable steering wheel.

Electrics:

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Starting and lighting | 24V. |
| Batteries | 2 x 12V 120Ah. |
| Alternator | Butec 55A. |

Wheels and tyres:

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| Wheels | 6.75 x 17.5 rims. |
| Tyres | 235/75R 17.5 low profile. |

Fuel Capacity:

167-litre tank offside mounted.

Performance:

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 0-30mph | 10 seconds. |
| 0-50mph | 22 seconds. |

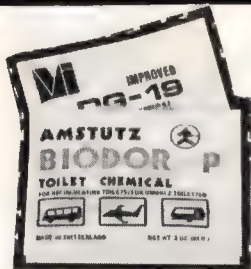
Fuel Consumption:

Test carried out on urban roads in Chesterfield and Sheffield, with some mileage on trunk roads and motorway in the Nottingham area.

Distance Fuel used MPG

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 103.83 miles (167.1 km) | 9.02 gallons (41 litres) | 11.51 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|

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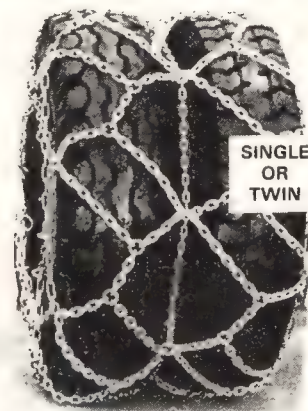
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PARKING

ALL GEARED UP BUT... NOWHERE TO GO



Drivers often have no option but to drive continually around the venue which their passengers are visiting, adding to the traffic

THE AIRPORT security guard is belligerent, as they sometimes are. After a crossfire of argument, he finally agrees to let your coach stand another five minutes until your party of incoming tourists emerge from the terminal.

The plane was late and now you're late. When you finally draw out of Heathrow on to the M4, it becomes apparent that your clients will have about five minutes to change at the hotel if they are not to miss the next part of their itinerary. Their courier has had a long day and his temper is frayed.

Even at 6.45, the evening traffic is bad. A set of traffic lights has broken down, there has been a bad accident at the junction, and now the emergency services have effectively blocked the road, causing a tail-back. The short-cut you once used to avoid this junction has been closed to coaches by the council, so you have to sit and wait.

IN the final part of Coachmart's London parking series, news editor Mark Williams listens to the London operator's viewpoint and discovers that beneath the cheerful veneer is anger, frustration and resentment.

With a few minutes to spare, you draw up at the hotel, relieved that you have at least found a setting-down point among the cars parked around the foyer. It is only as you unload the luggage that the reason for the gap becomes apparent: "Oi mate, you can't park that coach there," says the doorman. "We've got foreign royalty arriving in a minute. Get it moved".

Moved where? On-street coach parking is banned after 6.30pm. You've had the tachometer running some time and you need the break. You'll be back at the hotel in an hour or so to take the group

of students to the theatre, so there's not much point driving to the nearest official parking in the heavy traffic. Suddenly, the attraction of illegally parking the vehicle becomes apparent...

Good coach drivers are hard to come by and, with scenarios like this repeated every day in London, are getting even harder to find. It seems ridiculous, with the many other pressures which face the driver, he should have to worry about something as simple as setting down and picking up.

There are horror stories about coaches being clamped as they are unloading... true stories. One

driver was actually arrested while he unloaded luggage, after he'd refused to drive away and leave his passengers' suitcases unattended.

"Through our trade associations, the London Tour Coach Operators Association, the Guild of Coach Operators and the Bus and Coach Council, we need to pursue these problems with the various London boroughs and, more so, with the Department of Transport and Parliament," says LTCOA's liaison officer Paul Cowell, managing director of Capital Coaches.

"Incoming tourism is one of the main sources of revenue for London and the Government, and we need help and planning to solve the problem of coach parking in London."

Cowell, like many operators, is abroad often enough to be able to compare London with other major cities in Europe. Traffic is no less a problem on the continent, yet coaches are

Coachmart December 7, 1989

PARKING

welcomed and provided for, sometimes at the expense of the commuter's car.

"Things are much easier abroad," says Cowell. "My drivers can leave a vehicle in the centre of Paris without any hassle. We've had one clamped in about ten years."

Cowell's interest is specifically that of London tour coaches: "The commuter coaches in London don't get all this trouble. Nor do many foreign coaches. But our vehicles are in the city all day long. Perhaps they are just more conspicuous."

The long-term coach parking in London isn't good - usually a pot-holed building site with little, if any, security. The short-term parking is much worse, says Cowell, simply because it is notable by its absence. All too often, the policing of legitimate set-down points and parking bays seems bigoted, cars being left alone but coach drivers bending the rules bearing the brunt of criticism.

"We need to wait for the passengers while they visit each venue for about half an hour to an hour. The driver has problems trying to find somewhere to park for these short periods, and he often has no other option than to continually drive around the venue, thus adding to the traffic problems," Cowell complains.

"The developers do not help the situation by building hotels without coach parking facilities but hoping that the driver will find a convenient 'spot' where he can drop and collect his passengers," adds Chantal Davies, director of The Londoners, based at Peckham. "Alternatively they will boast a coach park which is ill-served, and is impossible to park in."

Davies is quite right to point out that not only his drivers suffer. So do the tourists. Some LTCOA members fear that London will lose a large number of its visitors if the nightmarish tour parking situation continues.

"When attempting to collect passengers, the driver will fear the footsteps of the traffic warden, who will come along regardless of the fact that the coach is not causing an obstruction and ask him to move it. He moves back into the traffic, causing more chaos, then needs a further 15 minutes to get back to where he has just left, by which time he is facing a group of irate tourists," explains Davies.

Bill Clarke, of Clarkes of London, highlights the strange attitude the public have to



Paul Cowell: "We need help and planning to solve the problem of coach parking in London".

coaches: "The public are prepared to wait for planes, trains and boats for any reason given. A lorry delivery can be late, but

demonstrated their commitment to tourism by improving the standard of vehicles beyond measure, paying the Green

' Things are much easier abroad. My drivers can leave a vehicle in the centre of Paris without any hassle. We've had one clamped in about ten years.'

oddly they don't see that a coach can ever be late in any circumstance."

Clarke points out that coach operators have already

Operator's Licence five years in advance, and generally improving insurance cover. It's his feeling, too, that London operators should not be offered

any priority but simply the right to load and unload, as with HGVs.

"In these days of ozone-polluted atmosphere, and the new green and clean environment, congestion in London can and should be avoided." And carrying upwards of 50 passengers, the coach could provide at least part of the answer, hints Clarke.

Clarke makes no bones about it... he is prepared to pay whatever is sensible to pave the way for better short-term parking. He has lost good drivers who can no longer take the pressures of the London merry-go-round.

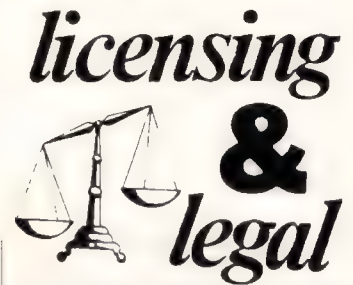
There are, of course, many, many other coach operators using London. Few, if any, of them are happy with the current situation and most feel better use could be made of the limited space there is within the city. If public transport is to have a role in the new Europe of 1992, it must take some priority on the city streets.

Most operators feel the Police could be a little more sympathetic to their difficulties, but recognise that over-enforcement of parking restrictions is not the problem. The sheer number of vehicles in London - and ironically the city's prosperity - has made every acre of land and every inch of Tarmac precious. It's a pity a little more wasn't set aside for Britain's ambassadors of tourism, the coach operators.

Can the current chaos be cured? If you have any views or ideas on easing the coach operator's nightmare just drop a line to Coachmart, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS.



One vehicle suspended from Validford licence for six months



**WEEKLY REPORT
ON LAW
AND THE
COACH OPERATOR**

By Michael Jewell

The North Eastern Traffic Commissioner, Mr Frederick Whalley, has renewed the eight vehicle licence held by Selby based Validford Ltd for a 12 months period only, while, at the same time, removing one vehicle from the authorisation for a period of six months by way of a penalty.

The company had been called to a Leeds public inquiry, at which the Commissioner was considering taking disciplinary action along with its application for licence renewal.

At the outset of the inquiry, Mr Stephen Kirkbright, for the company, said it was dropping its application to increase the vehicle authorisation to 12, and was seeking the straightforward renewal of the licence in respect of eight vehicles.

Asked about the directors and shareholders, Mr Kirkbright said that the directors were Mr Stephen Stockdale, who held 99 shares, and his son Mr John Stockdale, who held one share. The company secretary was Mr Stockdale's daughter, Mrs Julie O'Neill. Mr Chambers had resigned from the company. The Traffic Area had not been notified of his resignation and it was conceded that they ought to have been.

Mr Michael Welford, a Department of Transport vehicle examiner, said that he had visited the company's premises on three occasions in May and June. He inspected nine vehicles, issuing one immediate prohibition and three delayed prohibitions. Two other vehicles were given defect notices. The arrangement was for vehicles to be inspected on a monthly basis, but he was told that vehicles on service were inspected more frequently. The inspection sheets were not completed in full.

The company had a workshop measuring 40 feet by 50 feet, with two 33 foot inspection pits. Two skilled fitters and a semi-skilled man were employed. He believed that the inspections were being carried out but the standard was below that required of a holder of an operator's licence. He felt that an increase in the staffing levels might be of assistance.

Mr Welford said that a number of prohibition notices going back to 1985 had been issued. Three of the prohibitions, one in 1985 and two in 1986, had been in respect of accident damage, though one contained defects other than accident damage. Two other immediate prohibitions had been issued to the company's vehicles in 1986.

In reply to the Commissioner, Mr Welford said that certain of the prohibition items ought to have been noted when the vehicles were inspected by the company's staff. He felt that the staff were competent and that it was probably a matter of interpretation of standards.

Mr Kirkbright said that it was not suggested that the defects had not been there or that the prohibitions ought not to have been issued. The prohibitions were accepted.

Questioned by Mr Kirkbright, Mr Welford agreed that one vehicle had more defects than the rest put together. He said that he had been told that vehicle was being scrapped but it had just come in from service when he inspected it. He was not aware that the last trip that vehicle had done had been to the Rugby League Cup Final. Asked whether the vehicle showed signs of vandalism, Mr Welford said that the interior had been disgraceful. He agreed that the vehicle concerned had been inspected by

the company on April 28th. He said that the emergency door had been very difficult to open. One vehicle that had been inspected the same day by the company had been given a delayed prohibition. He accepted that a faulty master switch might not have been picked up.

Mr Kirkbright said that he was instructed that a spring leaf had broken when a mechanic road testing the vehicle had braked hard.

Mr Whalley commented that it was important that inspection sheets should have room for remedial action to be shown as well as defects. The present inspection sheet in use was a copy of a DoT inspection sheet, and the Department was only concerned with defects and not remedial action.

Questioned further by Mr Kirkbright, Mr Welford said that the second vehicle given a delayed prohibition had passed its annual test on April 18th and it was possible that the defects found could have arisen since then. There appeared to be a pattern of regular inspections. The records were being completed, though they could be a lot better. He would have thought that two skilled fitters and one semi-skilled would have been sufficient. The company would not be understaffed if they did the job right. There was no shortage of equipment and spares.

Mr Whalley said that in its application form, the company had stated that the service buses would be inspected every 10 days and the contract and private hire vehicles every two weeks.

Mr Kirkbright said that one of the problems had been that one of the skilled fitters had suffered ill health. He had now left the company and Mr John Stockdale

was in the garage full time.

Mr Whalley commented that the proof of the pudding was in the eating.

Mr Stephen Stockdale, the company's managing director, said they operated a number of local services, and six such services were currently registered. However, the company had entered into an agreement for the sale of the goodwill of three of those services to Selby & District Bus Co. Of the remaining registered services, two were school contract services and one was a town service in Goole. The balance of the business was schools and works contracts and private hire. Eight full time drivers and a number of part timers were employed.

The fitting staff had been left to their own devices in the past, as they had seemed to be adequate, his son having been involved with the office work and driving. His son was a qualified mechanic and when the other fitter suffered his medical problem, he had taken an increasing part in the maintenance of the vehicles.

Mr Stockdale said that he had periodically looked at the maintenance records, but not as often as he ought to have done.

Initially, there had been a book system for drivers to report defects. That did not work, as the drivers did not fill it in.

Consequently, he had instructed the drivers to report defects verbally to either John or himself.

Following the vehicle examiner's visit, it became clear that they needed to change the maintenance arrangements. His son had now been put in overall charge of the workshop, reporting direct to him. The periods of servicing were at least monthly on the coaches and at least every three weeks on the service buses.

Mr Whalley commented that the application form stated inspections would be carried out at much more frequent intervals than that.

Mr Stockdale said he was saying that was what would happen from now on. He had instituted a daily check system, with the drivers signing to say that their vehicles were free from defects. By and large, that system was working but it needed to be enforced on a regular basis. One or two drivers required constant reminders. Maintenance was not restricted by finance in any way. Last year the company had spent £31,937 on spares and work put out. In addition to the company's own staff, there was a self-employed skilled fitter available to work for them

as and when required.

The vehicle given the immediate prohibition had been engaged on a visit to Wembley the previous weekend. A lot of damage had been done inside the vehicle. The seats were in a terrible mess. The driver had said "don't give me those guys next year." The passengers had misbehaved, ignoring the driver's request not to take alcoholic drink on to the coach. He had been told that they had damaged the emergency door on a motorway service area by banging on it hard and swinging on it. That vehicle had never been on the road again since.

Questioned by Mr Whalley, Mr Stockdale said that the company had applied for its current licence in March 1984. It had complied with the statement of intention that it would keep its vehicles in a fit and roadworthy condition to the best of its ability. However, he admitted that statement of intention had not in fact been complied with. He agreed that the company had had a warning letter in February 1987, after two vehicles had been given prohibitions and one vehicle a defect notice. He agreed that the company's reply included a statement that its vehicles would be inspected every three weeks, and high mileage vehicles every

two weeks. He maintained that the company had in the main kept to that stated intention.

Mr Whalley said that was not the evidence that Mr Stockdale had given, and it was clear that the company had not complied with the statement of intention contained in that letter.

In reply to Mr Whalley, Mr Stockdale agreed that they had not achieved their aim of bringing the fleet up to a high standard of safety and efficiency.

Mr Whalley said that it seemed to him that the real problem was not the system or the staff, but the will of the directors to control things properly.

Mr Stockdale said that he had put his son in the workshop and he would go into the workshop more frequently himself. He

agreed that they did not have a copy of the "PSV Tester's Manual". He agreed that it was a prerequisite for a proper maintenance system, and said that he would obtain a copy. He would also liaise with the vehicle examiner to obtain a more appropriate inspection form. He gave an undertaking to ensure that the company's vehicles were kept in a good condition.

Mr Kirkbright said that he was instructed that the company intended to recruit an additional member of maintenance staff. It had taken steps every time shortcomings had been pointed out. He suggested that perhaps the licence ought to be renewed for a shorter period than normal.

In his decision, Mr Whalley said that prohibitions had been

imposed on the company's vehicles over the last five years and statements of intention in relation to maintenance had not been kept. The vehicles demonstrably had not been kept in a fit condition. There were grounds for taking action against the licence, but he did not feel that they were sufficient to justify revocation. He was imposing a more modest penalty to drive home to the company that failing to maintain vehicles in a fit condition was just not acceptable. He was satisfied that the company now had adequate arrangements for maintenance at this time, but they needed to be proven. The company had to demonstrate that its statements of intention were being kept over the next 12 months.

No action taken over hours and tacho convictions

The North Western Traffic Commissioner, Mr Martin Albu, has decided not to take any disciplinary action against the PSV operators licence held by Mercers (Longridge) Ltd, following the company's conviction on a series of drivers' hours and tachograph offences.

In July the company, and four of its drivers, were ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £2,050, when they appeared before the Preston Magistrates. (Coachmart, July 13th 1989.) As a result, it was called to disciplinary proceedings before the Commissioner sitting in Manchester.

For Mercers, Mr John Backhouse said it had been fined £200 on each of eight charges of permitting drivers to exceed 4.5 hours driving without taking the required amount of break. The circumstances surrounding the offences were that the company had been involved in a contract for the carriage of passengers on a feeder service on behalf of a holiday company. The timetable was drawn up by the holiday firm, and they were responsible for scheduling the whole operation. Things started to go wrong, in that on certain days of the year the drivers had problems keeping to the

timetable.

When Mercers found out about the difficulties, they told the holiday firm that if they carried on doing the scheduling they, Mercers, would not be held financially responsible, and they instructed their drivers to observe the regulations and forget the timetable. However, the drivers continued to commit offences due to pressure from passengers on return journeys, particularly in instances where the passengers had already been delayed before being picked up. The passengers just wanted to get home and the drivers had succumbed to that pressure.

The company had pleaded guilty to permitting the offences because it had been aware of the problems, so it could not be said that they did not have "knowledge". When the contract came up for retender, Mercers tendered a price taking account of the extra vehicles and drivers which would enable them to operate the scheduled service within the regulations. The contract went to another operator who submitted a lower tender. However, that operator ran into difficulty and Mercers had to help the holiday firm out. That showed that the contract could not be run legally at a lower financial figure than the

one submitted by Mercers, said Mr Backhouse.

Mr Andrew McLaughlin, the company's managing director, said that they would not consider taking on the contract at a lesser price than the one they had tendered. The transport side of the business had since been split into coaches and buses, with each part controlled by a transport manager holding a Certificate of Professional Competence. Because the operation had been split in that way, there was less responsibility and each of the transport managers had more time to monitor the tachograph charts and give attention to drivers' hours. Previously, the analysis of the tachograph charts had been contracted out. However, that was now being done "in house".

After hearing financial evidence in private, at the request of the company, Mr Albu said that the offences were not something that he could condone. However, he had heard that they had arisen due to the operation of a particular contract and that steps had been taken to rectify the situation, preventing any recurrence. Under the circumstances, he felt that he need not take any action other than to record a warning.

High court overturn decision not to renew PSV licence on medical grounds

The High Court have directed the Huddersfield Magistrates to allow an appeal by bus driver Mr Douglas Sidle, against the refusal of the North Eastern Traffic Commissioner, Mr Frederick Whalley, to renew his PSV driving licence on medical grounds.

Mr Sidle had asked for a judicial review of a decision by the Magistrates, rejecting his appeal against the Commissioner's decision.

Mr Justice Simon Brown said that in 1959 there had been a

doctor's note which had stated that episodes of sleeplessness by Mr Sidle were a suggestion of nocturnal epilepsy. Mr Sidle had held a PSV driving licence since 1963 and it had previously been renewed without contention. However, the Commissioner refused to renew the licence on this occasion on the grounds that Mr Sidle had had an attack of epilepsy since the age of five. The magistrates had held that Mr Sidle had not, on the balance of probabilities, proved that he had

not had any attacks.

However, said Mr Justice Brown, there was a report from a Doctor James saying that there was no sign that there had been an attack since Mr Sidle was five. That report had been accepted and no evidence to the contrary had been called. There had been no cross-examination of Doctor James and nothing to contradict his diagnosis. In such circumstances, the magistrates could not but allow Mr Sidle's appeal.



**WEEKLY REPORT
ON LAW**

**AND THE
COACH OPERATOR**

By Michael Jewell

Paperwork problems lead to disciplinary proceedings

Problems over paperwork led to the appearance of Stockport based Mr Ian Gaunt, trading as Limehurst Travel, at disciplinary proceedings before the North Western Traffic Commissioner, Mr Martin Albu, sitting in Manchester.

Mr Albu said that he was concerned about Mr Gaunt's maintenance arrangements and about difficulties that the Traffic Area had experienced in getting in touch with him. If there had been a change of address, than the Traffic Area Office had to be notified. It was a condition of the licence that any such change should be notified to the Commissioner within 28 days.

Mr Gaunt said that he had sent a letter to the vehicle examiner at the Bredbury Test Station and he had thought that the vehicle examiner would have sent a copy to the Commissioner. The address for correspondence was Lilac Lane, Hollins, Oldham. The vehicles were kept at Stockport Caravan Centre, Gregg Street, Reddish, where there was a portakabin as an office and garage facilities. A letter had been submitted to the Commissioner setting out the permission granted to him to use those facilities. That

permission currently ran until June 1990 and it was renewable annually. He was professionally qualified and he did all his own maintenance work.

Mr Albu said that a maintenance investigation had been carried out by a vehicle examiner. Mr Gaunt had been operating two vehicles at the time. Both were examined and the vehicle examiner had been reasonably satisfied with their

condition. The only matter that had concerned him was the fact that there were no maintenance records available, though the maintenance was obviously being carried out.

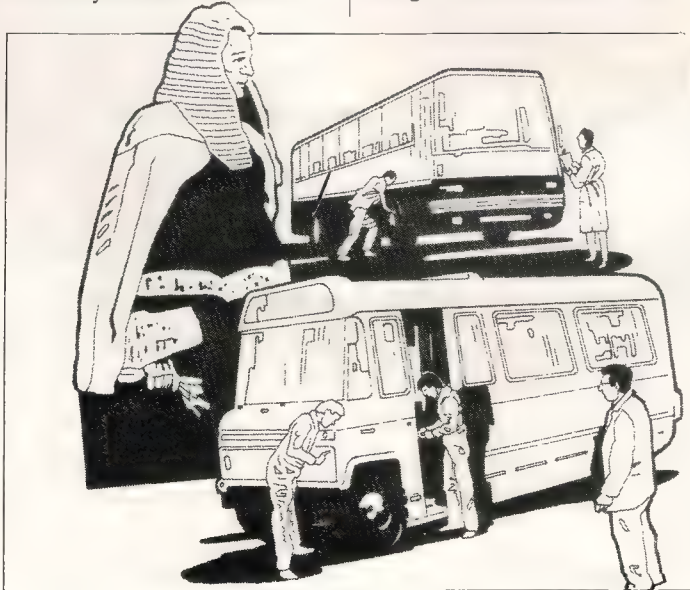
Mr Gaunt said that he had had problems in getting hold of the maintenance records. He had suspected a cheque fraud and he had contacted the police. It had involved a woman he had been living with at the time. All the

maintenance records were kept in the house they had been living in, and he was unable to get in touch with her except through the police. However, he had since been able to recover the records.

Producing the maintenance records, Mr Gaunt said that the vehicles were inspected monthly. He employed drivers to drive the vehicles, the only driving that he did himself being half an hour in the morning and the same at night. He had now introduced a proper driver defect reporting system. Previously, defects had been written on the back of the work sheets.

Taking no action for the moment, Mr Albu said that the licence expired in September 1990 and he would review the situation then.

Clearly paperwork was not Mr Gaunt's favourite occupation. He was not alone in that. However, he had to keep the Traffic Area notified of any changes and he had to maintain proper records for his vehicles. He had noted that Mr Gaunt had put a new driver defect reporting system into effect and he would want to see that proper maintenance records had been kept when the licence fell due for renewal.



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It is not difficult to take a personal interest in seating. A casual look at customer behaviour in one of the large multiple furnishing stores is sufficient evidence to suggest that choice is based on individual preferences.

Unlike domestic seating, PSV passenger seating has not changed dramatically with increasing standards of living. The pressure has always been to maximise seating capacity while chasing the Ann Gloag "bums on seats" strategy.

With notable special exceptions, the trend in seat design has been to design within very tight space parameters. War time practice with perimeter seating and wooden seats may seem a distant memory, but some elements of modern practice are not far removed. Have you ever tried the rear lower deck seats on a rear engined double decker? The confined space and rigid upright design leaves a great deal to be desired.

Lack of comfort is not restricted to service buses. One of my pet hates as a driver was to do a two-driver job with any 11 metre 53 seater coach and 52 passengers. Not that I wish to appear antisocial, but that spare passenger seat left so little space for any form of relaxation. My wish was that at the very least the "boss" could share the same experience, but perhaps of even more importance was the need for the vehicle designer to suffer as well ... but what about all those thousands of fare paying passengers who have been persuaded to leave the comfort of their firesides for the benefit of coach travel?

Until very recently the pressure of the £1,000 seat was all-important. However, could it be that breaking that barrier has encouraged more thought for the long suffering passenger? Or will profit per vehicle continue to be paramount?

Market Forces

Readers who believe in market forces will probably point out the lack of conflict between passenger comfort and profit. British Rail and London Underground are at present providing a great deal of business for the transport seat industry in the course of an extensive rail vehicle refurbishment programme. One reason for such a programme is to increase business.

The UK's obsession with maximum seating is highlighted by a comparison between the marketing strategy employed by Duple for its 425 and the Royale class specification in the Benelux countries. With a one metre pitch Royale gives sufficient room for the seats to actually recline!



The Ascott seat as supplied by MTB for the Reeve Burgess Beagle shown at the BCC show.

A QUESTION OF COMFORT

Every bus and coach needs them; some passengers abuse them; but Mike Morgan confirms that there's more to seats than meets the eye.

Upheaval in the bus and coach industry has left an impression on the seat industry. Although immature, the minibus market has brought with it new thoughts on seating. Coachbuilders may be anxious to advertise maximum seating capacity, but operators are learning from experience with local bus work - shopping, and passengers on a 16 seat Transit are a very tight fit. Consequently luggage pens and passenger circulation areas are becoming more common, thus reducing seating capacity. An increasing number of minicoach operators are reporting an expanding

market for specialist low capacity coaches, particularly for the corporate market.

John Mainwaring, MD of MTB Equipment Ltd, believes that coachbuilders should be more concerned with providing comfort for passengers rather than maximising capacity. He quoted Hallmark as an example of an operator that specified reduced capacity so as to provide high quality seating. Mainwaring told me, "operators are trying to cover too many opportunities. Volume is the whole thing", he said as he expressed regret that more coach

companies did not raise the quality of their operation.

Brighter and Better

The industry has a traditional conservative view on design. During the past three years there have been notable attempts to brighten the exterior of buses and coaches. Sadly the depressed demand for new vehicles has resulted in the presentation of some very old wine in new bottles. MTB's Mainwaring told me that the materials were available to brighten interiors. An

order for more than 400 passenger places can guarantee the choice of a moquette in any colour. Of increasing interest are polypropylene moulded city bus seats similar to MTB's Fibra 4. Mainwaring said, "they are available in any colour or combination of colours. Design consultants could be engaged to lift the interior of any vehicle".

European

Manufactured by Spanish company Fainsa, the Fibra is just one example of a growing trend by the seat industry to look towards co-operation with EC countries. MTB sources 90 per cent of its frames from Fainsa, and has established a close working relationship with the company, which produces 250,000 seats per annum. Fainsa's testing facilities encourage Mainwaring to welcome any forthcoming changes in legislation with confidence.

Cambro Lazzerini is another example of an UK/European link. It is a division of Callow & Maddox Bros Ltd, a company with a long tradition in the motor trade. Established in October 1988 Cambro is a joint venture with Lazzerini, the Italian seat manufacturer. Sales Director, Andy Wotherspoon explained that the joint initiative reflected a belief that the market should be "1992 orientated". A third Coventry factory is to be opened on a 12 acre



Richards and Shaw (Trim) Ltd market this 'Algarve'. Leyland Bus have been supplied with 15 sets for West Midlands Travel.

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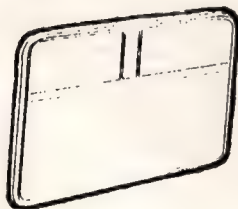
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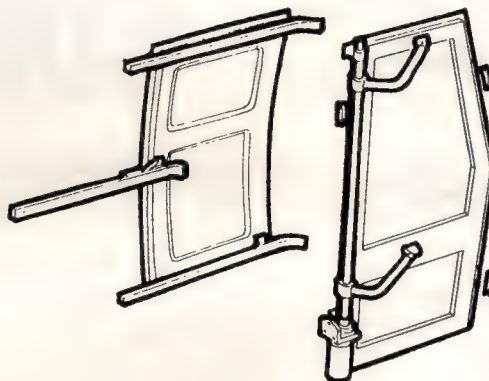
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site at Baginton. Wotherspoon said that Cambro were in the business of "cut, sew, and trim", frames and foam being bought from its Italian supplier. He suggested that a market existed for this comparative newcomer because customers "expressed a need for choice, which was recognised in new products".

Specialisation

European connections have brought the benefits of specialisation to both MTB and Cambro Lazzerini. Wotherspoon quoted "a competitive price against the in-house products of traditional coach builders". He also claimed that customers respected the quality, choice, style and new materials.

Unlike in-house producers who may also have strict quality control, subcontracting gives a buyer what Wotherspoon called a "reject facility". He said, "this encourages the experts to get on with what they are good at".

Restructuring

The size of the PSV seat market has changed as a consequence of changes in the structure of not only the bus manufacturing, but also bus operating company size.

Wotherspoon said that over the past nine months he had contacted over 60 bus and coach customers in addition to 400 "senior operators". Sets of Cambro seats have been supplied to Europa, Optare, and Scott of Bellshill. The recent delivery of Wadham Stringer Wessex bodies to Bournemouth's Yellowbus was fitted with Cambro seats.

These examples illustrate the importance of the mini/midi market to the seat manufacturers. Each of the large number of body builders and van conversion specialists is a potential customer. One feature of this market sector is the realisation by the vehicle supplier of the importance of offering choice to its customer.

MTB have expanded at 30 per cent per annum during the past three years. The main thrust of this expansion has come from making a speciality in the mini/midi market. The Reeve Burgess Beagle at the BCC show was fitted with 33 MTB Ascott seats.

Choice

Wadham Stringer is an example of a mini/midi bus supplier offering customers a choice of seats. The Winchester has either Cambro Lazzerini recliners or Abbacus non-recliners. The company selects according to shape/fit, availability, type, and price.

Abbacus supply service bus seats to PMT, CVE, Dormobile, and for



High-backed seating, as in this all-Leyland Olympian double decker for Southern Vectis, improves passenger comfort.

the award-winning Duple bodied Dart. Because 20 per cent of its 12,000 per annum output is for the welfare market, the company has experience of fitting seat belts. MD Frank Riola told me his concerns over the fitment of belts on PSV's. Like other manufacturers he expressed no worries over the attachment of belts to the frame, but Riola asked, "Who would be liable in the event of an accident?" He told me that Range Rover and Mercedes were the only vehicles with seat mounted belts to be tested at MIRA. For PSV application belts have to be fitted to a seat. Therefore the most important stress point is the seat mounting, which is outside his control.

Safety

Draft EC regulations exist for standards of seat strength. Although there will be a lack of clarity until such regulation become substantive, Lazzerini claim to be testing now to EEC R80 seat strength, but it can only give guidance on the use of an M10 bolt for seat fitment.

Graham Watts (MTB sales) said that ex NBC companies had specific strength requirements, but in the interests of clarity MTB "welcome a specific regulation on seat strength", although he added "What is it?"

MTB would also welcome clear guidelines on fire resistance. Special moulds can be obtained to mould combustion modified foam,

although there is a cost premium of up to £10 per piece (£40 per double seat).

Fire and vandalism seem to go hand in hand. However, it is a problem by no means restricted to the top deck of PSVs or to the UK. French manufacturer Compin market a non-tear vandal resistant seat cover, which has been in use on the Paris Metro since 1984. Out of 30,000 sets supplied only 20 have required repair - making it more viable to replace. The secret is the use of wire mesh behind the fabric preventing deliberate damage and consequent vulnerability to fire.

Richard Browne of Vogel GB told me that the German manufacturer also supplied a plastic seat available with integral mesh in its squabs. The cost premium for this 601 seat is £30 per double seat.

Accessories

Vogel seats are fitted to most of the well known imported coach bodies. Jonckheere, Berkhof, LAG, Neoplan and Ikarus were on Browne's list, which is notable for its lack of British builders, but Browne told me that he was hopeful of encouraging a change in attitudes. The Vogel reclining mechanism incorporates a gas cylinder to provide a variable recline. Its range of coach seats stretches to the Quadro 5000, which according to Browne, 'can only be accommodated with two and one

spacing' because of its sumptuous specification. He confirmed that mini-bus builders such as Coachcraft were anxious to provide customers with the right choice of seat.

Diplomat have previously supplied Plaxton's with its Ambassador range of seats. This company reports some business from operators wishing to reseat coaches. Yorkshire Traction and Devon General being recent customers, with the latter downgrading coaches with bus type seats. Typically this might cost £2,000 for a 53 seater, which compares with £5,000 plus for a set of coach seats.

Diplomat market a range of seat accessories such as ash trays and grab handles by German manufacturer Happich. Even though it can supply a full range of seats, a significant proportion of Diplomat's current business is now rail related.

Welfare Market

All seats produced by West Midlands manufacturer Richards and Shaw have seat belt mounting points incorporated in the frame. This initiative follows from its experience in the welfare side of the business. Seventy per cent of the 1000 per week output is for this market sector. However, the company has obtained orders from Leyland Bus Workington for high back seats to be fitted to 15 of the recent 250 Lynx order for West Midlands Travel, and the same 'Algarve' was fitted to a recent order of seven Olympians for PMT.

Comfort

Drivers' seats have been excluded from this review, but it is necessary to reflect on the vast improvements enjoyed by drivers in recent years. A suspended, multi-adjustable seat is now very common on coaches, and drivers of new service buses can normally claim to have the best seat in the house.

I detect a trend in passenger seating that will mirror some of those changes. Plaxton have offered the Bostrom 303 drivers seat for some time, thus reflecting an area where this coachbuilder has offered choice. (Bostrom plc now trades as KAB Seating Ltd.)

Although heavily influenced by the HGV market, the PSV driver seating options emphasise comfort. I am not for one minute suggesting that passengers should necessarily have multi-adjustable suspended seats, but I do hope that comfort and space will feature in the options available to all bus and coach passenger in the future. An operator who provides 400mm seats on its vehicles really does have a narrow view of its customer.



Vogel seating is available from many continental coachbuilders - including LAG.

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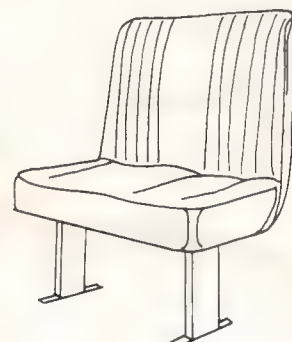
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Warm welcome for coach operators at World Travel

THE WORLD Travel Market last week saw a staggering array of exhibits from around 150 countries anxious to sell tourism... and coach operators were welcomed with open arms.

Organisers had bettered their total of 2,244 stands achieved in 1988, giving operators an even better market in which to shop. European countries were well represented and occupied an entire hall, the centrepiece of which was Sweden's control-tower style exhibit.

The UK's tourist industry was by no means the poor relation at the show, demonstrating imagination with its stands and its initiatives. Interest from overseas tour operators was good, and 1990

is predicted to have none of the hallmarks of the dour incoming season just experienced.

The UK coaching industry was represented by four major exhibitors - National Express, Scottish Citylink, Silver Coach Lines and VL Coach and Bus. In the main, it seemed a busy time for them.

National Express dominated the entrance with a new Neoplan 77-seat double-deck, which will be entering service with NE subsidiary Trathens next year, running from London to the West Country.

"We had a steady flow of clients," said National Express spokesman Stuart Render. "Not only have we been able to talk

business with stand visitors, we have been able to visit other stands and explain what the Eurolines network can offer, and to show that it is constantly being built upon."

It was a similar story from the two Scottish coach companies, Citylink promoting its services with a video show and a bold exhibition of the quality of their Cordon Bleu vehicles. The Caledonian flavour of the stand was enhanced by a kilted staff.

"The good thing about World Travel Market is that it is not open to the public at large. There is no time wasting - every visitor is a potential client for trade business," said managing director Alan Howes.

Lakeside country club for Cumbria

AMONG the many excursion and tour opportunities offered by the Cumbrian Tourist Board area is the Langdale Hotel and Country Club.

Positioned North of Windermere, the complex is set in the heart of Lakeland. It can provide virtually any special activity - birdwatching, fishing, and many others - plus an extensive solarium, gym and tropical pool.

Group rates are reasonable for this standard of hotel, and bookings are through the reservations manager, on 09667 302.



Blast from the past

WARTIME London is possibly the most vivid memory many Americans have of Britain, and the city's representatives pictured here were ready to do battle on that, and many other fronts.

The newly-refurbished Imperial War Museum was just one of 14 attractions represented on the LTB's stand. It is running its Blitz Experience again this year, giving tourists a full flavour of a wartime air raid.

Big tourism push

EASTBOURNE has produced a new holiday guide, which was launched on the South East Tourism stand at the World Travel Market.

Among many announcements about the town's tourism initiative was the news that it has installed an Integra computer booking system in its tourist information centre.

Attractions on offer include the Sovereign Centre fun pool, opened by Princess Anne this year, while the Crumbles Harbour Village currently being built will include a 4 star 150-room hotel, moorings for over 1,800 boats, and a shopping complex.

Eastbourne's tourist office is on Eastbourne 410000.

West Country wonders lined up

THE West Country offers several new attractions and new accommodation in 1990, including the 100-bed Bath Spa Hotel built by THF and due to open in January.

The Bath Spa is just ten minutes from the city centre. It was originally the 19th century home of General Augustus Andrews, and has been immaculately restored. Dorchester's ancient King's Arms hotel, which features in Thomas Hardy's book *Far From The Madding Crowd*, offers

a Tutankhamun suite and Lawrence of Arabia suite, which speak for themselves.

Musical weekends are the forte of the Castle Hotel at Taunton, and this year's programme is sponsored by Eldridge Pope the brewer. A typical weekend package includes a Friday concert, gala dinner on Saturday, and a morning recital on Sunday prior to departure.

The West Country Tourist Office can be 'phoned on 0392 76351.

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Find out the facts and join

SIR

Firstly, I am pleased to see that CTC is prompting response via the trade press, be it on occasions critical.

In reply to Mr JAW Morton, I would just like to say, as a coach operator, we are more than pleased to be involved with CTC.

The Coach Tourism Council is, as its name suggests, a committee of like minded people from all aspects of coach tourism representing all kinds of coach travel. There can be very few

operators in the UK who would not benefit in some way if

Joe Public perceived travel by coach in a higher regard. Many operators would, it seems, believe that CTC is for coach tour/holiday operators only. This is a total misconception. The aims are to promote all coach tourism, be it a day at the seaside or a visit to a theme park - in fact, anywhere a coach travels with passengers.

If we, as an industry, could raise our profile to the standards

most of us offer we would undoubtedly be able to increase our profits to warrant the investment we all make in vehicles. I am sure most operators would agree that on the continent coach travel is not seen as the poor relation to other forms of transport, as it often is within the UK.

Finally, BAWTA as a trade association is a member with two representatives on the CTC board and obviously stands to gain from the success of the campaign. No more, however,

than the coach companies, tourist boards, hotel chains, ferry companies and suppliers who are also members.

We should all be thankful that someone, be he a BAWTA member or representative of a ferry company, has taken the initiative to do something positive for the industry. So, do not knock it, find out the facts and join.

M R Mott - Managing Director
Motts Coaches (Aylesbury) Ltd

Marksman misses the mark

SIR

I enjoy Marksman's articles, he certainly is on target sometimes and includes everything from truth to tripe, but I feel that he wasted the majority of his page discussing Charles Dunbar's criticism of his grammar; this, surely, is for the letter page.

Also on the same page was reference to the 14 days' grace in relation to VED. There is not, and never has been, 14 days' grace for VED.

The VED was the responsibility of the County Council but you could renew it at the Post Office and you are allowed up to 14 days after the expiry of your old disc to do so.

After that the renewal had to be made through the offices of the County Council. But if you did not renew the VED by the date of expiry it was, and still is, an offence to use the vehicle on the road. The offence is using or keeping a vehicle on the road without displaying a valid VED disc, which has to be displayed on the left hand side of the windscreen. So even if you have a valid disc and it has fallen on to the floor of the vehicle, it is not displayed and therefore the offence has been committed.

Brian Roomes
Avro & Elm Park Coaches

...but is spot on with safety

SIR

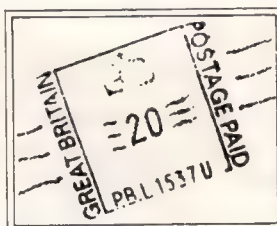
I read with interest Marksman's timely comment on the subject of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations in *Coachmart* dated 23 November 1989.

I wonder if he and other readers are aware of further associated legislation which is due to become effective on 1 April 1990. I refer to the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 which will supersede the Electricity (Factories Act) Special Regulations 1908 and 1944 and, unlike the superseded Regulations, will apply to all places of work

and to all systems, irrespective of voltage.

The Regulations place responsibility on all employers to ensure that electrical systems at places of work are designed, installed and maintained to a high standard as a precaution against injury or danger. A document entitled Memorandum of Guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 is available, price £4.00 from HMSO Bookshops. It details the Regulations and gives guidance on interpretation.

H S Postlethwaite
Blackpool



Send your letters to:
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Nostalgia Corner



The photograph of this AEC Reliance with Harrington Cavalier bodywork was supplied by reader Owen Woodliffe.

This coach was used by the Metropolitan Traffic Commissioner to test suitable routes into Victoria Coach Station for the newly permitted length of 36 feet in 1962. It is reputed to have been the first 36 foot (11 metre) coach to operate on an express service in the UK when it worked Grey Green's service from King's Cross to Felixstowe on 1st February 1962.

Grey Green was then the fleet name of family-owned George Ewer of Stamford Hill, North London. The AEC had an AH470 engine which was considered underpowered when compared with 680 engined Leyland Leopards. Consequently the half dozen AECs bought in the early 1960's were sold in 1965.

Harrington's of Hove ceased coachbuilding only four years after the delivery of this AEC - seen during the 1962 Brighton Coach Rally.

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1979 BEDFORD YMT DOMINANT 53
seats, extra large side lockers, Bristol
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£6,500 would consider part ex-
change, either way. Telephone 021
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53 seater. All tidy vehicles
in blue and white. Sept
1980 registrations.
Dominant Two with dome
and power door. Just
tested. Choice of two,
£8,000.

Dec 1978 Plaxton Express,
tested to 18.11.90, £6,000.

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Express, tested to 30.4.90,
£4,500.

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Travel
Mansfield
743576**

(33694/BE)

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PJK Plaxton, 29 seater,
exterior white/blue, power
door, MoT May 1990.

£5,000 + VAT

No Offers

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(0277) 215526**

(33670/BE)

1977 (S) BEDFORD PJK Dominant, 29
seater, tested June 1990, radio cassette,
PA, power door, wheel trims, very
clean and tidy throughout, £4,750 ono
+ VAT. Tel. (0437) 890230. (33343/BE/65)

1979 PLAXTON SUPREME, three, 53
seater, taxed, long test, re-seated, re-
floored this year, very tidy, Telma,
£6,500. Tel. 051 647 9060. (33364/BE/65)

1971 BEDFORD PLAXTON, 45 seater
with full year's test, £1,800 + VAT.
Also 50 PLAXTON, reclining seats, ab-
out to be removed, offers. Tel. South-
end (0702) 540456. (34114/BE/66)

BEDFORD 466

Plaxton body, MoT
and taxed, reduced
for quick sale.

**£5,000 inclusive
ovno**

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1978 PIP YLQ 45 seater Dominant II,
taxed, tested, new full engine May
1989, still under warranty, new clutch,
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(33363)

1981 BEDFORD YNT Turbo, full auto-
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53 retrimmed seats, radio/PA, express
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(0747) 83229 (Wiltshire). (33648/BE)

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vehicle, £8,250 ono + VAT or part ex-
change for Midi Coach. Tel. 031 666
0857 or 0836 588331. (33654/BE)

BEDFORD YMT Plaxton Supreme

53 seats, 1977 R Reg,
power door, side
lockers, resprayed all
white. Very good
condition, MoT 16/11/90

**£4,950 + VAT
for quick sale**

**Tel: 0533 874241,
0533 825069 or Car
Phone 0860 838027**

(33661/BE)

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49E type seats, radio
cassette, P.A., power door,
MoT Feb 1990. Very good
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£26,000 ono + VAT

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BRISTOL 1972 (L) RELL6L (680) ECW, 59 seats, MoT May '90, good reliable workhorse, **£2,650 + VAT. Tel. (0749) 830126 (Somerset).** (33247/BR/65)

1977 BRISTOL LH, 41 seats, dual purpose, power door, MoT Aug '90, **£3,250. Transcity, 01 302 8800.** (33696/BR)

1977 BRISTOL LH DP COACH, 41 seats, power door, test Sept '90, taxed Jan '90, very clean, runs well, 114,900 km, **£3,000 + VAT. Tel. (0404) 89411 eve, (0404) 46354 day (Devon).** (33381/BR)

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FORD

FORD 1977 R1114 DUPLÉ, 53 seats, lockers, Telma etc, MoT Nov '90, good order, **£4,500 + VAT.** Also a **1976 R1014 DUPLÉ**, 45 seats, MoT April '90, very tidy vehicle, must be seen, **£4,250 + VAT. Tel. (0749) 830126 (Somerset) ask for Graham.** (33245/FO/65)

1977 FORD DOMINANT, 53 seats, MoT till 21/3/90, **£3,000 + VAT.** **1977 FORD DOMINANT**, 53 seats, MoT till 7/3/90, **£3,500 + VAT.** **1979 FORD ALPHA**, 53 seats, MoT till 1/5/90, **£6,500 + VAT.** Also **BEDFORD ALPHA**, 1980, MoT till 4/4/90, 53 seats, **£7,500 + VAT.** Sanders Chs, Norfolk (0263) 713261 or 823401 (evenings). (33672/FO/66)

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48 dual-purpose seats, recently retrimmed in grey, red/orange striped moquette, radio/cassette, wheel trims, tax & MoT April 1990, good runner.

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Closing date 31 Dec, 1989

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12 metre, 57 seats, power door, in service up to MoT expiry.

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680 engine, 5-speed, semi automatic gearbox, 11-metre, 49 seater, Express bodies.

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MoT March 1990 and November 1990.

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ZF 6 speed Super Goldliner IV, 53 seats, radio/PA, TV, box, driver's bunk, continental rear door, curtains, crew seat, tested Nov '90

£32,500 + VAT

or sensible offers. PX considered

1976 LEYLAND S/D L/H DRIVE

Den Oudstein 680 Leyland 4 speed semi-auto gearbox unit, conversion or break for parts, runs well has been tested for UK use. Class V

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seats, toilet, TV, video,
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excellent condition.

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1981 VOLVO B58 11-metre Plaxton,
38 seats, ex-Glendon Tours, absolute-
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full year's MoT, a truly exceptional
vehicle. £25,000 ono + VAT. Tel. 041
889 4050. (33606/VO)

VOLVO B58 PLAXTON SUPREME,
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seats, Bristol dome, taxed, MoT Aug
'90, immaculate condition. Tel: 0388
765078. (33252/VO)



APRIL 1989 VOLVO B10M MK III PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 (new model)

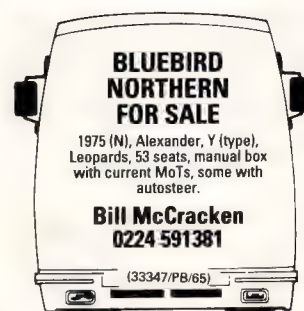
49/53 reclining seats, centre
demountable toilet,
continental door, aircraft
style lockers, seat back
pouches, low mileage, still
under warranty. Work with
vehicle if required.

£85,000 + VAT

Selwyns Coaches
Tel. 0928 564515

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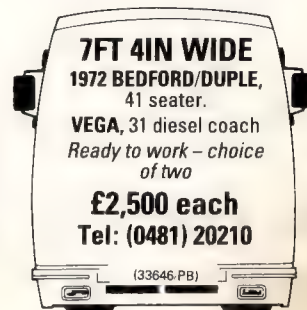


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Can go to work immediately. £11,000
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Good previous home. £21,000
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Must be seen. £32,500
- 1981 FORD R1114/PLAXTON - 53 seats, long ticket.
What else can we say? £11,000
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Super little coach. £22,000
- 1982 MAN SR280 - 48 seats, full executive, toilet, kitchen,
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drinks, private plates. *Definitely a collector's piece.* £42,000

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video, new engine, new paint work, private plate, long COF.
Concours condition. £50,000
- 1985 LEYLAND 245/WALTER ALEXANDER BODY TC - Choice of 2, turbo
engine, 53 recliners, semi-automatic gearbox, Telma, Webasto,
courier seat, radio PA, air door, private plates.
Excellent dual purpose vehicles. £36,000
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£3,695

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Carlyle community body, 15 seater minibuses, diesel, removable seats, Henderson tail lift, ultra low step, power doors.

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Carlyle

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Highroof, highback seats, full luxury trim, 14 seater, radio, cassette, choice of two, both repainted white. 1 year's MoT

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Coaches. 0828 27310

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£28,700 incl CIF and road tax.

★ 21 high-back seats with boot (PMT). **£25,595.**

14 seater 308 (PMT). **£17,550**

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28 lux seats with boot, P.O.A.

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- 1979 BEDFORD YMT PLAXTON SUPREME, 53 seats.
- 1987 FORD TRANSIT DIESEL, 12 coach seats.
- 1985 BEDFORD CF DIESEL, 12 seats.
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Mercedes Benz 308, 14 seater Minibus..... **£16,600**
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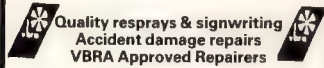
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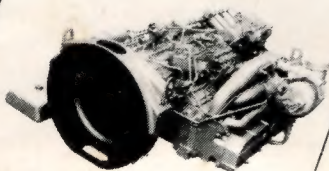
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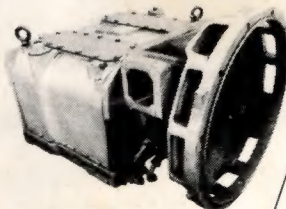


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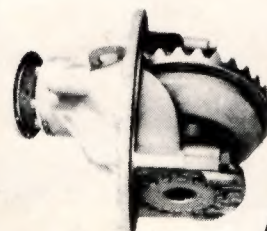
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